DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 250 577 CE 040 181

AUTHOR Minzey, Jack D.; Townsend, Anthony C.
TITLE Core Plus Education. A Model for Schools of the Future.
SPONS AGENCY Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, Mich.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Career Education; *Community Education; Continuing Education; *Educational Facilities; *Educational Facilities Design; Educational Facilities Planning; Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; Futures (of Society); Lifelong Learning; *Models; Public Education; *Role of Education; *School Buildings; School Role; Schools
IDENTIFIERS *Core Plus Education

ABSTRACT

The institution of school has developed to the extent that it is no longer only important to the lives of those in society and to the society as a whole, it is vital. In the last decade, the "deschoolers" have argued that school is no longer appropriate and in serving the society it does not adequately serve the individual. School, as it currently operates, serves neither the individual nor the society. School systems are vulnerable to major changes because they are not cost effective, they are serving an increasingly smaller percentage of the population, and what they are doing is not seen as relevant to current society. A school system to serve the individual and society might be the "core-plus" model. The more stable "core" would address the processes of the community. The programmatic "plus" would consist of all formal classes. Core-plus schools overcome the earlier mentioned deficiencies by being more cost effective because they are used more often, serve those out of school, and involve the community. Core-plus education, based on principles of community education, enhances K-12 education by using community resources, reconceptualizes facility usage, and changes the perception of what public schooling should be. (YLB)

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CORE PLUS EDUCATION

A Model for Schools of the future

Jack D. Minzey
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At certain times in our lives, each of us has moments when we feel inspired by some activity or thought which touches our minds. Frequently, we ponder such thoughts and then let them slip away to oblivion. Periodically, however, we take the time to record our feelings in order to organize them more completely and to share them with others.

The following text is the outcome of such an experience. The ideas presented are certainly in need of further clarification, extension, and refinement. In many instances, the concepts will be ignored, rejected or misunderstood. There is the possibility, however, that in some cases, this publication may shed a new light on someone's thinking or inspire others to further thought on this subject. It was this possibility that motivated the authors to produce and present this document for your consideration.

Just as the realities of the future are inextricably linked to the dreams and decisions of the present, so too, the hope of a better society in the future is inextricably linked to the dream of providing the best of all possible worlds for our children and their children. May the decisions we make now turn our present dreams into future realities.

TO

Christina Marie Minzey
Michael David Minzey

Paul Anthony Townsend
Cindy Michelle Townsend
Benjamin Michael Townsend

and to all the decision makers of the next millennium.....some of whom are in schools right now.

CORE PLUS EDUCATION

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Preface

In May, 1981, following the first National Conference of the Australian Association for Community Education in Queensland, the two authors scheduled a meeting in Melbourne. During that meeting, they visited a school that was designed under the Victorian Education Department's new building policy. The name of this new building policy as expressed by Neville Barwick, the then Assistant-Director General of Education in Victoria, was "Core-Plus". The policy was designed to make a more efficient use of the school site. The new schools contain a permanent 'core' that consists of administrative and centralized activities such as library, art room. multi-purpose room and canteen, together with appropriate amenities. The learning areas or classrooms are relocatable structures that can be brought to the site or taken away as the school population warrants. In this way, as the size of the school changes with demographic shifts of population, the school responds with more or less buildings as the need arises. If the school population becomes so small as to no longer warrant the existence of the school, the learning areas are removed, and the core remains for community use. In discussions that followed, it became obvious to the authors that the principles expressed by this building policy could be elaborated to form a philosophy of education. This monograph makes some tentative steps towards the expression of that philosophy.

Chapter I - The Development of Schools

Since the institution of school was established, it has been itself as the "core" of education for Western Civilization. Schools were seen by the people who worked in them, and by the people who went through them, as an appropriate means of passing the great traditions of western society from one generation to the next, and also, as an appropriate means by which successive generations obtained the skills necessary to live within that society. As society evolved, the types of knowledge necessary for productive citizenship changed, and the schools responded accordingly. The administrators of schools reacted to the values and attitudes held by society, and as the core areas of knowledge changed, the teaching techniques became reflections of the prevailing understanding of what was needed to produce worthy citizens. Sometimes these reflections were primarily the perception of professional educators, but in each instance, schooling, which had become synonomous with education, was held accountable for providing the core of what each generation needed, both personally and socially.

School prided itself for providing what young people needed to become functional, stable and productive members of society, and since the growth of knowledge and social change was slow, the school was able to respond to these changes with little conflict. Students who were successful within the school system usually became successful within the community, and this success was held up as an example of what schools could do, and how important school could be. As more and more success stories were made public, society as a whole came to recognize the values associated with staying in school. In fact, the importance of school to the individual became implicit in the notion of school, and attendance became mandatory.

It became increasingly obvious that the longer one stayed at school, the more employable one would be, and consequently, the better off one would be in life, at least in a financial sense. The connection between life success and the length of time spent at school was documented and helped to generate a validity for the institution of schooling. In a remarkably short space of time, the school system managed to establish for itself a position of power and respect.

Those who were successful naturally decided that they would like their children to be successful also, and it became obvious that to establish this pathway to success, a pecking order of schools needed to be established. To maintain a gap between those that were successful and those that were not, a system of private schools was established. These schools had money and/or position as criteria for entry rather than ability. Successful completion of a private school program became more readily accepted than completion of a public school program. At a higher education level, schooling now became as important to success in life as money or family had been in the past. Since those that attended the "better" schools were usually those that had either money or power or both, then the distance between the "haves" and the "have-nots" was extended. School began to serve some individuals better than others.

Corresponding with the development of the private school was another phenomenon. School, or as it was sometimes now called-education, was beginning to be seen by those in lower socio-economic classes as a means of improving their station in life; of narrowing the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots". Since one's entrance to the work force and society depended on the quality of one's qualifications, then qualifications became all important. Because of the respect paid to the qualifications it conferred, the school system gradually gained considerable power over individuals and ultimately the society it was supposed to serve. The institution of schooling became egocentric and saw itself both as the 'core' of the young individual's life and also of society. Its provision of the knowledge necessary for employment was soon interpreted as the provision of the knowledge necessary to survive. Without schools one was nothing. The purpose of school had been solidified.

School, it was now assumed, served the dual purpose of providing the stability needed for the survival of society and the knowledge necessary for the survival of the individual. On both counts it was argued that school was the 'core'. A number of characteristics and assumptions flowed quite naturally from the underlying premise that school was the core of the society it serves. The first of these characteristics was that school needed to be compulsory. It had to be in order that society could benefit by having a common core of knowledge that all people could learn. Since school could not be compulsory for life, then other elements such as age and curriculum had to be taken into account. Consequently, school became compulsory for children who were between certain ages; it taught specific information that was common to all schools, and it made the assumption that information is graded in a specific way so that the learner had to pass from one grade to the next higher one and could not jump a grade or learn information appropriate to one grade before they had passed through all of the preceding ones in order. The method of learning information, the order in which it is to be learned, the determination of what information is to be learned and under what

conditions it is to be learned were all determined by persons other than the learner. These characteristics still apply to schools today.

Perhaps most critical of all is the assumption that what is learned in the compulsory years of school is both a necessary and sufficient condition for the survival of the individual in society for the rest of that person's life. The information taught in school is assumed to be necessary because without it the individual will not be a constructive and productive member of society either socially or economically, and it is assumed to be sufficient because no further learning is needed for the person to survive within society. This is not to assume that people do not go on to higher forms of school (universities and college, etc.) but only that they do not need to do so in order to survive. The continued acceptance of this set of characteristics is an indication of the power of school to determine certain aspects of the lives of its participants. It could well be argued that without school and the programs it provides, the individual is absolutely disadvantaged in the current social structure.

If this is the case, then school is no longer only important to the lives of those in society and to the society as a whole, it is vital. School is the core of the person's life, upon which other aspects are built, and it is the basis upon which the stability of society is constructed.

Yet, despite the fact that some communities, and certain members of most communities, believe that there is great value in attending a school, schooling as an institution is neither universal in time nor in space. The institution that we know as a school, that free, compulsory and secular form of learning, is only about two hundred years old, and in almost all cases, is confined to industrialized countries. It is likely that fifty percent of the world's population have neither seen nor heard of a school, and in many third world countries, what scant school system there is, is neither free nor compulsory.

Chapter II - School and the Individual (The Deschoolers)

In the last decade, the importance of school has been questioned, even in the societies where schooling is well established. In 1971, Everett Reimer published a book called School is Dead. The argument contained in the book is similar to that of other writers such as Ivan Illich, John Holt, Paulo Freire and Paul Goodman who, with Reimer, have collectively come to be known as the "deschoolers". The deschoolers criticize schools, arguing that school is an institution that is in actuality not doing what it is purporting to do. They argue that school is no longer appropriate, and that it does not adequately serve the individual.

The deschoolers claim that there is a "hidden curriculum" at every school that operates within a compulsory school system. It does not matter what subject matter is taught, how it is taught or by whom it is taught; because children have to go to school, the major messages of school are passed on by the system, rather than by the subject matter. The messages include:

- Education and Schooling are the same thing.
- Education is a commodity to be bought and sold.
- The more education you have, the more successful you will be.
- Once you leave school you enter the "real" world.

The deschoolers say that although schools are supposed to be educating children, they are in fact "brain-washing" them into existence in and acceptance of a particular social system. Rather than having a situation where the individual is given the information that provides the basis of the core for the establishment of patterns of learning and understanding that will serve one for the rest of one's life, school is forcing individuals into a competitive, no-win situation where the individual is powerless to control one's own destiny. By not providing the individual with experience for understanding and using capabilities that are inherent in every human being, by not giving the individual the power to determine for oneself the sorts of decisions that are critical for the development of an autonomous person, school has alienated the individual from the system, from the joys of learning and discovering, from other people, and, ultimately, from oneself. The suppression of individual expression in both the process of the individual's schooling and the decision-making that is necessary for that individual's schooling, closely reflects the suppression of individual expression that occurs in society itself. The alienation felt by the student in school becomes, as one grows older, the alienation felt by the individual in society where he sees himself as powerless to change the society in which he lives. The lack of decision-making when one is at school leads to the acceptance of others making decisions when one is an adult. The lack of choice in the subject matter at school leads one to accept the imposition of certain ways of thinking by one as an adult. A person who is treated as incapable during the school years may well become incapable as an adult.

It may well be that the human has always seen himself as separated or alienated from his surroundings. Some early philosophers suggested that alienation had to do with the human fall from Grace with God, and that since Eden, the human has been trying to become God-like once again. Others have suggested that the human saw itself as being separate from the natural world in a way that other things were not. Karl Marx has argued that alienation was the product of the capitalist system of economy that rose with the industrial revolution. Alvin Toffler, using hindsight, recently argued that capitalism was really not the cause at all. The economic systems of the industrial revolution separated the processes of production and consumption that was evident in the agrarian world and that this symptom was identical in both capitalist and communist countries. It was the separation of producer and consumer that alienated both. The most persuasive of these arguments is that the human's rationality - the thing that allows us to perceive of the separation between man and the rest of nature - is the cause of its alienation. The human is different from the rest of nature in that although it can control the environment to some extent, it still has the ability to stand and watch in awe, fright and despair the powers of nature that it cannot control. The human has the ability to generate concepts of creation that have no basis in the real world of everyday life. Yet no proof has yet been given to demonstrate the existence of beliefs that every culture and race on the globe accepts as being true.

The human being may have always been in an alienated state. It is difficult to argue that the human is more alienated now than at any time in history. The alienation felt by the human since the industrial revolution could not be seen as any greater than in the feudal agrarian age where the lords took what they wanted and left the producers to survive on what was left. In some respects, things haven't changed all that much. It is hard to suggest that the humans of the past were any worse off than the countless millions of humans on the globe today who because of the geography of their birth, are doomed to suffer a life of misery and pain. In this sense, alienation can be seen as a physical entity, a human condition that cannot be overcome without major changes in the overall social system. Perhaps something in the future will be able to instigate the necessary changes, but until something of that nature occurs, those who are starving will always feel separated from those who can eat. Those who have a little seem to be perpetually chasing those who have more, and those who have most are forever fending off those who are trying to overtake them. In this context of competition, one that it seems has always been in existence, there is no chance for any delineation to occur.

If the arguments above relate to real, physical alienation, there seems to be little that can be done to overcome it in the short term. Those who wish to have equality are generally those without power. Those who have power in most cases do not wish to share it equally. Those in the middle can do little to change the actual situation of either those with power or those who are powerless. But if there is nothing to be done about one's real alienation, then perhaps it is more important in the short term to concentrate on what might be called perceived alienation. This notion involves bringing the idea of alienation back to the perception of the individual rather than leaving it in the realm of the world at large. If we separate real alienation from perceived alienation, then there is a possibility of some improvement in the future.

Concentrating on the perception rather than the reality involves concentrating on the particular rather than the general. It may well be impossible to solve the problems of the world. However, if we take each individual, as an individual, it is possible to resolve issues of concern. Bit by bit, and individual after individual, the particular starts to change the general, and the world, perhaps in the long term, starts to change. In other words, the resolution of societal problems through the solution of individual problems may be a synergestic way of improving the world. Many of the arguments of the past, those of Marx, Illich and Freire and those of the future with Toffler, Orwell and others rely on the notion of perceptual alienation. If it is obvious that there can be no real possibility of a short term change in the structure of things at large - and there is no chink in the armour of history that suggests there might be - then the only chance of any long term change is to concentrate on the individual's perception of oneself and the role one has to play within one's microcosm of the world. If we can make the world microcosmic enough, then every individual becomes critically important in the order and operation of that microcosm.

If we are concerned about perceptual alienation, we must then refer to the rationality of man. Man feels alienated because he sees what others have and what others do, and he interprets these things as a component of himself. Thus, other's riches can be seen as "my lack of wealth", other's power can be seen as "my

powerlessness", and this rationality can bring about an additional alienation that is more personal and difficult for the individual to accept. However, although real alienation may be difficult to overcome, perceptual alienation offers some possibilities for improving the circumstances. By changing the perception of the individual, the alienation might be resolved. If a person feels that he is involved in the decision-making process, he does not feel alienated from the decision. If a person perceives that he has the opportunity to gain wealth through hard work, he does not feel as alienated from those who already have wealth. Perceptual alienation can be brought back to being a function of one's attitude towards life and the people with whom one interacts. If one has a negative attitude towards taking hold of one's life, one is likely to accept decisions and feel alienated. If one is positive towards the contributions one can make, one is likely to act or react and feel in control.

Every individual, particularly in the Western world, does have power. The individual regularly makes choices, although sometimes limited, about his daily life. We all choose the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the mode of transport we prefer; some have to choose between one or more courses of action in an educational or commercial enterprise. If the individual has powers in those areas and uses them regularly, then why does he or she not use their power in others; to vote in elections, to argue against an unfair political imposition, or to defend oneself against unwarranted attacks. It is here that it can be seen that our microcosmic individual falls into one of two categories - those who take the initiative and act or react, and those who merely accept the decisions of others.

In our microcosmic view, we have now identified a major difference between people. It is that aspect of an individual's personality that causes them to be an active participant in life or to be a passive recipient of it. Some people might call it motivation; others call it the spirit or soul. It could well be called a part of the core. The core is that basic part of society which is to be transmitted from one generation to another, and at least one major aspect of that task would be teaching people to participate actively in the processes affecting their lives. If the schooling system were genuinely concerned with the total development of the core of the individual, one would expect people to be active rather than passive in this respect.

The external observer may now start to wonder why the schooling system that concentrated on providing a set of core experiences for every individual, and thus providing each with a basis for future survival in society, could also produce two significantly different groups of people as those just mentioned. One would expect that such a system would produce a wide range of autonomous individuals, each able to generate and argue for their own unique reaction. The answer lies in the type of core experiences that the schools offer and the way in which they are offered. Because the individual, within the school system, is powerless to control either the types of information or mode of transmission that the schooling system provides until fairly late in the educational hierarchy, most of those who enter school, emerge with very little ability to make major decisions for themselves or to respond to decisions made by others. The experiences within the school system do not enhance this aspect of the core but rather suppress it.

In fact, the main elements of the core which the schools tend to deal with involve basic skills, cultural and historical studies, and employment skills. The skills or responsibilities related to an autonomous, participatory individual are rarely dealt with. Our public schools develop children who find their greatest degree of autonomy and decision making away from the school. As adults, these same people continue to find their satisfaction for autonomy and decision-making away from their places of employment.

Whether the schools are the cause of this phenomenon is unclear, but in any case, they are certainly reinforcers of this behaviour. Children who have the minimum number of years in school are deprived of the sorts of experiences that will help them to develop autonomy. It is true that those who stay in the system for a long period of time are given more and more flexibility. Unfortunately most children, through either financial or academic reasons, leave school before this flexibility is evident. The compulsory school system, established with egalitarian ideals, in fact discriminates against many individuals because of the way it is structured. This discrimination continues for the rest of the individual's life because of the strong connection between school longevity and eventual employment.

From the deschoolers point of view, this system brings about much of the alienation that is felt by people who have left school. To concentrate on improving or changing the "core" for all individuals would mean an acceptance of a different way of operating the system. The deschoolers wish to see a situation where education is placed back in the hands of individuals who choose what, how, where and when they will be educated. By this means, they feel that they could eliminate the wide discrepancies between individuals covered by the current school system.

Chapter III - School and Society

It might be argued that in fact, the purpose of schools is not to cater to the individual, but to society and society's needs. As Toffler has pointed out, formal schooling is not a product of the capitalist system but of industralized nations. He goes even further to suggest that the purpose of schooling is limited. Three goals are to be achieved: punctuality, obedience, and the ability to perform repetitive tasks.

It is interesting to note that the Act that made education compulsory in Britain came just three years after the Act preventing children under nine being able to work in factories was passed. It may be cynical to suggest that the closeness in time of these two Acts indicates that school was established to train people for factory work, but other writers have made this assumption. Whatever the motives of the legislators of the time, a case could be made that the introduction of compulsory schooling in the 1870's assisted society by providing for its labour force a group of people of workable age who had already been imbued with habits and attitudes that made them ideally suited for factory work. If we accept this, then the deschoolers position reverts to one of perspective. They suggest that school <u>should</u> cater to the individual, but others may equally validly claim that school <u>should</u> cater to the society it serves. If that is the case, then goals of the schools must come from an analysis of society, not the individual.

If we accept the arguments of the deschoolers, and at the same time try to recognize Toffler's comments, then we need to reassess what we have meant by the term 'core'. The deschooler's assumption was that school should provide the core experiences upon which the individual could build his or her life. It seems that this assumption may no longer be valid, and that instead, we need to look at the school as providing that set of experiences that make up the core of society. The shift from using school for individual needs to using it for societal needs may be arguable morally, but for the point of this document, it would resolve the dilemma of whether school can be seen as the core in a different sense. If it is acceptable to having schooling as the core for society rather than for the individual, the position maintained by the deschoolers loses some of its strength. The argument now becomes whether or not school, as it is currently constituted, provides the sorts of experiences that will maintain the core that will assist society in its survival.

But even when viewed as institutions whose "core" is to serve society rather than the individual, schools still fall short of their mark. Communities still perceive that schools are not adequately addressing the skills needed to promote and preserve the society. This is probably true because the schools have lost track of the many changes which our society has undergone in the past few years. Tremendous changes have taken place in our social structure. Yet schools are offering a "core" to their students which is based on our society as it existed in the 1950's. In order to develop a "core" relative to the society which it is supposed to serve, it is necessary to have a full comprehension of what changes have and are taking place in that society.

For a start, the factory line worker is likely to disappear in the next twenty or thirty years. As we approach the technological age, more and more factory workers are being replaced by industrial robots. Similarly, computer technology, already well developed with word processors, visual display terminals of all sorts of credit card banking accounts, will displace thousands of workers in the next few years. The development of the silicon chip industry is such that the single transistor of 1969 has today been replaced by a silicon chip, one centimeter square, which can accommodate a quarter of a million transistors, and it is predicted that by 1990 it will be possible to have a microprocessor with the equivalent of two million transistors on that one centimeter square for a cost of just $15.

Microprocessors can now read, talk, obey verbal orders, and do practically anything a human can do, more efficiently, in less time, with no mistakes, and with no time off for coffee breaks, holidays or strikes. The miracle of landing the space shuttle Columbia not only in America, or even California, but on a designated airstrip at a designated time is only an indication of things to come. We may have a generation of current workers who in the next five, ten or twenty years, are displaced because their work has been taken over by machines or else the knowledge upon which their job rests is obsolete. What are these people, who were originally schooled to survive in an industrial society for the rest of their lives, going to do to feel that they are a valuable and contributing citizen? What are the students, who now go through the pre, primary, secondary, tertiary schooling system, going to do for employment once the knowledge they have learned becomes obsolete?

It seems that school, once again, is not providing what is necessary. In fact, on both counts, school as it is currently constituted and operating is failing. Instead of producing autonomous self-actualizing individuals, school has produced people who feel threatened by other people and the structures of society and alienated from themselves. Instead of producing people who have a range of skills which allow them to fit into the workforce and become constructive and productive members of society, school is producing people with skills appropriate to the past and people with little hope of retraining for the future. School, as it currently operates, serves neither the individual nor the society, and must be classified as a major area of concern.

What is more important, the very skills that the society needs to be able to cope with a rapidly changing, technological situation are identical to the ones that the individual needs to be able to cope with his or her feelings of alienation. Just as people need to be able to take control of their lives and alter them to suit the current situation, so too, society needs citizens that are able to change with the changing times, are able to retrain, or change jobs, or learn new information. The current school system that concentrates on information rather than understanding, and on a passive approach to learning rather than an active pursuit of the knowledge of how to learn, is serving neither the individual nor the society in which we live.

Chapter IV - The Future of School

The current school system has a questionable future. It has outlived its usefulness because it has lost its purpose. To contemplate a continuation of the same structure is to assume that society and technology will now stand still. However, clinging to the present concept of school will have certain outcomes. The gap between the "haves" and "have nots" will widen and an increase in social problems will follow increased unemployment. Fewer people who are working will have to pay for more people who are not. Increased family breakdown will occur as the structures of society change quicker than the individual can cope. Finally, society as a whole will become disillusioned with schooling and demand that it be altered or eliminated.

The possibility that school, as it now exists, may become extinct is more than a remote fantasy - it is something that could happen before the end of the century. Whether or not it does happen depends a great deal on the schools themselves, but unless the ossification of many years of minimal relevance is chipped away very quickly, the damage and erosion that is currently occurring to schools and the teaching profession may go too far to ever be retrieved. In possibly ninety percent of the schools, a child who enters grade one in 1984 will be taught information, techniques and skills appropriate to the 1960's, and yet, that child will emerge from schooling, hopefully as a productive human being, after the year 2000. Is it appropriate to assume that the child will be capable of operating in society at that time? Or is it more likely that the information relevant to that child will have to be collected from sources other than what is provided by today's school?

The typical school, with its teacher centered orientation, may no longer be the best way to teach. We not only have the situation where a person can watch events, such as the Olympic Games, live from anywhere in the world, and watch, worldwide, the shooting of the President of the United States seconds after it has occurred (it took twelve days for news of Lincoln's Assassination to reach London), but we can record information and play it back, at slow-motion if necessary, until such time as we have gained what we want to know. We are also starting to interact with machines through home computer-games units, and in many parts of the world, it is possible to have interactive television where viewers can participate in the program in the same way that talk-back radio operates. The introduction of cable television opens further doors to the consumer in terms of choosing what the person wants to know. Children and adults are seeing these machines in a new, positive light. Machines can be viewed as being a threat if they take one's job, but they are a fountain of knowledge if used in the right way.

Imagine for a moment the possibilities. An interactive television system has access to computer facilities that store in their memory banks educational information. Instead of reading about volcanoes or hearing about them from the teacher, a child can program his computer and see a volcano at work. Through the interactive system, he can ask the computer any question he wishes about volcanoes. Imaginative programs could maintain the child's interest and provide a one-to-one learning experience for up to thirty or more children. Lessons may be for two or three hours a day broken down into short sessions that account for the child's age, intelligence and attention span. Social interaction can take place at a designated time during the day under the supervision of parents or paid leisure workers. If we look at the supervision situation at schools during recesses, then there would probably only be the need for one supervisor for every two hundred children. A terminal placed in the child's house also does not work set hours. A program may be called at 6:00 a.m. or 7:00 p.m. and consequently could align itself far more easily to the motivational aspects of learning. It is thus possible to replace some of the teaching responsibilities of a teacher with a machine that is capable of providing information faster, and perhaps more accurately than a teacher can and to replace the supervisory functions of a teacher with a specially trained supervisor who is capable of handling more children at once than a teacher is paid to do.

However, there are other reasons for suggesting that the traditional teacher could become extinct sometime in the near future. One is philosophical - a great number of parents are seeing that the school system is no longer relevant to them or their children. An ever increasing number of parents have removed their children from regular school and have placed them in private schools, some at great expense and hardship to the parents, because they see these schools as being more relevant to their children's future and also because they have more say in the type of schooling their child will receive. Other parents establish their own schools, some times illegally, because of their dissatisfaction with regular schools, and their inability to afford the costs of private schools. Each of these is an indication of dissatisfaction with regular schools. Many parents see the mass education of school as counter-productive to their child's growth, and seek alternate methods of securing education for their children.

Another of the problems facing the schools is a demographic one. The population of the community, as with most western societies, is getting older. This trend will continue. As the percentage of people within the community gets older, more and more people will have little stake in the traditional school system. This is compounded by the fact that an ever-increasing proportion of the people twenty and over are not having children at all. Already, there is a clear majority of the community that feels it has no direct relation to the school system as it currently exists.

The third major problem confronting educators is an economic one. The cost of the school system increases each year even though there may be fewer children in schools. Approximately 80-85% of the school budget is based on the salaries of teachers. Each year inflation and "salary increment" (the component that associates years of service with gradually increasing levels of salary) increases salary by about 15%. Since loss of students does not necessarily result in a correlating loss of staff, the per pupil costs of school, as well as the overall costs, are increasing dramatically each year, even though there are substantial losses in student population. At a time when approximately eighty percent of the population, who feel they receive little or no direct benefit from the education system, contribute millions of dollars in taxes on capital and recurrent expenditure in schools for twenty percent of the population, who make no contribution to the cost at all, arguments that may suggest replacing expensive teachers with machines that cost less while still performing a similar task may become more attractive.

In general, then, there are three reasons why the school systems (pre, primary, secondary) are vulnerable to major change:

1) they are not cost-effective,

2) they are serving an increasingly smaller percentage of the population,

3) what they are doing is not seen as relevant to current society.

When the community at large has these feelings about education, it makes it easier for governments to cut education budgets. Recent events suggest that if budgets are cut, there is very little community protest. Those who do protest have a direct stake in education - the general community remains silent.

Chapter V - The Core-Plus School

Two reasons have been advanced as to the main purpose of a public school. One is to focus on the needs of the individual to become a self fulfilled, active participant in society, and the other emphasizes serving the needs of the society. These two need not be virtually exclusive, and indeed, they probably compliment each other rather than detract from the merits of each. In order to serve the needs of the individual, it is necessary to have a good perception of the society in which one is going to live and react. And, the needs of society can best be served by enhancing the potentials of each separate member of that society. This is particularly true of democratic cultures which are premised on the idea that only an educated,

participating citizenry can develop the ultimate in a participatory democracy. Thus, the two ideals of education for the individual and education for society seem to be both compatible and attainable.

With these two concepts combined as one goal, it is now possible to seek a school system which would attempt to accomplish this task. Such a school system might be that encompassed in the term "core-plus". Generally, in educational jargon, the term core has referred to the essential part of the curriculum and has been used interchangeably with the word "basics". Thus, core meant the very essential part of schooling which represented the minimal learning skills for the school aged population. The plus aspects of schooling referred to those things which might be less essential and even border on the term "frills".

In the context of this paper, "core-plus" would take on a significantly different meaning. The "core" component would accept as a basic assumption that the purpose of the public school is to encourage and support those activities which enhance life in the community. The local school would become the nerve center for community interaction and would serve to foster community involvement for personal and community reasons. Emphasis would be on the development of the local community through the co-ordination of community services to meet community needs and the participation of community members in community activities, including the political and developmental processes.

The co-ordination of community services would ensure the identification and resolution of local problems by the community and would cater to individual needs in a way that a centralized system has never had the time or the personnel to do in the past. Involvement of the individual in the local political and community development processes would have benefits both to the individual and to the community as a whole. The individual, by his contribution to the decision-making processes, would not only resolve his need for involvement in community activities and his need to know what is happening in the community, but would also gain a new perception of himself as a person capable of making decisions and exerting some power over his life and his environment. This growing confidence in his own ability would lead the individual towards the role of an active participant in determining directions for his own life rather than being a passive recipient of other's decisions about him. The community would benefit by having a broad decision-making base that would result in better decisions being made and a greater community commitment to enact those decisions. Since any local community can be seen as a microcosm of the state or the nation, then the development of participation at the local level would have a positive transfer effect on the individual's commitment to involvement in the larger setting. Thus the development of a commitment to the "core" experiences of participation, decision-making, delivery of services and commitment to community service at the local level would assist in the accomplishment of the wider goal of improving the society at large. The commitment to "core" would result in the development and co-ordination of services, the developmental planning and use of resources on a more utilitarian basis and the increase in the organization and use of community input through committees, councils and political involvement.

The "plus" part of the plan would be programatic. It would focus on technical training for employment and personal growth activities. This would consist of all the formal classes, courses and offerings for all members of the community. The primary and secondary schools would be a part of these as would such things as vocational classes, leisure classes, recreation, enrichment classes, remedial courses, cultural activities, and any other programs designed to meet the specific needs of community members. The "plus" would ebb and flow depending upon the nature of the community such as age, economics, or particular circumstances.

The "core" would tend to be more stable, since its function is to address the processes of the community, and these processes (services and participation) would remain the same in purpose as long as a community existed. From an individual's view point, the "core" would aim to provide those experiences that would really enable him to function as a citizen in modern society. The ability to learn and relearn, the ability to make decisions, and the desire to be an active participant in society would all become part of the school's mandate.

The "plus" would serve the individuals "schooling" needs and would lead to such things as retraining, diplomas by certification, and specific knowledge in various fields of academics. "Plus" would continue to serve the traditional area which schools have served in the past but with the acceptance of the concept that education is a life time process and should be available throughout one's lifetime. "Core" would focus on community as an entity and seek to enhance the activities and interaction necessary for the growth of the collective members of a particular area.

The core-plus school suggests that, perhaps for the first time in history, the individual needs and the societal needs coincide. The <u>society</u> of the future will need a population that:

1) is able to change work as the types of work changes;

2) is able to make decisions for themselves;

3) is prepared to make maximum use of diminishing resources;

4) is able to profitably utilize any increase in leisure time;

5) is able to work towards, and is committed to, local community improvements.

The <u>individual</u> of the future, to be a responsive, productive citizen, will need the ability to make decisions, the ability to retrain or be re-educated for new work, the ability to make maximum use of leisure time, and a care and concern for others in the community and for the welfare of the community itself. The core-plus schools will enable the individual to learn the value of service to others and participation in the affairs of the community as well as the skills needed to earn a living and develop personally, thus enabling the future needs of both the society and the individuals within it to be satisfied.

There is an important point to make, at this juncture, which may be obvious, but is critical to the development of this proposed idea. "Core-plus" education would apply to all members of the community. The student body for both the "core" and the "plus" activities would be everyone who lives within the community. There would not be any arbitrary age constraints for participation in the schools activities. Schools would be responsible for the delivery of the "core" and the "plus" segments of their curricula to everyone who resides within their school boundaries. While this may seem like an ambitious undertaking, it is critical, for the success of this concept, that the content of "core-plus" education be offered to all of the community for each member's entire life.

The basic premise of the argument for core-plus schools is that the purpose of any institution is to serve both the individual and the society for which it is created. The corollary of this premise is that as society changes, so too should its institutions. Futurists agree that society is changing at an ever increasing pace. Yet the changes in schools have been minimal. By and large, the information being taught is the same as it was twenty or thirty years ago. If schools are going to carry out their functions appropriately, they are going to have to look at both what has happened to society and what the futurists are predicting.

John Naisbitt, in his book Megatrends, lists ten emergent trends that he sees will be vital to our everyday lives in the future. He identifies these changes in our society as follows:

	FROM	TO
1.	Industrialized Society	Information Society
2.	Centralization	Decentralization
3.	Party Politics	Issue Politics
4.	Machines	Human Technology
5.	Racism/Sexism	Ageism
6.	Top-Down Management	Bottom-up Management
7.	Equal access to capital	Equal health/education
8.	Bigness	Appropriate size
9.	"Company" board of directors	Independent board of directors
10.	Representative democracy	Participating democracy

These changes become important as a basis for arguing for certain types of things to occur. Toffler, in The Third Wave, agrees with Naisbitt and others that we

are embarking on a new society. We are leaving the age of industry and entering the age of technology. The post-industrial society that the futurists talk about involves issues that will affect every person in our society. As technology increases and the types of information that are transmitted becomes more rapid, massive numbers of people will suffer dislocation of one form or another. Areas of concern that will affect people increasingly in the next decade include unemployment and the need for retraining or social welfare to protect those people who have become unemployed, dwindling supplies of fossil fuels and possible future energy sources, the balance between the escalation of technology and the maintenance of appropriate ecological systems, and the maintenance of an appropriate educational system that will allow the citizens of the community to remain productive and contributing members of that society. In this changing world, knowledge will become paramount to the individual and the political unit, and education will replace capital as the most important resource in society.

If we do accept the prediction that we are moving from an industrial age to a technological/informational age, then there are some direct implications for schools. It is probably the first time since compulsory schools began that a need exists to reassess the role of the public schools. Perhaps it is time to develop a new set of principles for guiding schools in the twenty-first century. If we accept that reading, writing and 'rithmetic are the "three r's" for current schools, then it could be argued that Relevance, Realism and Responsiveness should be the guiding principles for core-plus schools. The new set of "3R's" does not mean that some of the areas currently operating in schools should not continue to operate - only that the core-plus school must be responsive to new needs that will arise or have already arisen.

The success of core-plus schools will be measured by the extent to which they can overcome the deficiencies currently occurring in the school system and identified earlier in this paper. Let us look at the deficiencies again and see how "core-plus" schools might address these concerns:

Cost effectiveness — the core-plus school becomes more cost-effective because it is used more often. Rather than having the school available for use between 10-20% of the year, the core-plus school is used before and after the normal school program, on weekends and vacations. The taxpayers money is spread over a longer time frame, and the core-plus school is a place that "wears out rather than rusts out". Increasing the number of hours that the core-plus school is open decreases the cost per hour that it takes to operate. Increasing the number of people in the community that use the core-plus school decreases the cost per person. At a time when many different agencies and services operate offices and facilities in a community, it is both realistic and responsive to avoid duplication of services. The core-plus school would become the community complex providing access to educational, recreational, and human services on one site. The cost to the community of this procedure would be far less than to establish separate buildings, and the cost to the individual would be reduced in terms of traveling costs. Also, since ninety percent of the community is within walking distance of the public schools, public services become available to a far greater percentage of the population than is currently true. In the core-plus facility, the core would be the only permanent part of the physical plant and would be build to

accommodate the kind of activities described for the "core". The plus facilities would continue to be temporary, portable structures, and could be increased, decreased or transported as the need dictates.

Serving a smaller percentage of the population — at a time when the population of schools is getting smaller because of changing demographic trends, it is both realistic and responsive to provide core-plus school opportunities to those who have already left school. At a time when work-related information becomes obsolete at an ever increasing rate, it is both realistic and responsive for core-plus schools to provide retraining opportunities for the unemployed. At a time when employing authorities call for greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills, it is both realistic and responsive to provide those functionally illiterate in the work force with additional educational opportunities to learn how to read and write. At a time when decision-making is being thrust upon the community and the individual at an ever increased rate, it is realistic and responsive for the core-plus school to let every individual know what the options are. At a time when it is more important to know how to learn rather than to know what to learn, it is both realistic and responsive for the core-plus school to concentrate on the process of learning rather than subject matter.

The core-plus school will cater to all of the community and will be able to respond to new educational demands as they arise. As well as being more cost-effective in allowing a greater proportion of the community to use the facilities of the school, the core-plus school will provide a service that currently is only offered on an informal basis. It is as inappropriate to suggest that people over the age of eighteen will no longer need to have learning experiences as it is to suggest they no longer need to have health care. Rooms and facilities vacated by children who have not been replaced by others due to demographic trends can be used during the day by older people; appropriate classes can cater to both children and adults simultaneously, and school facilities can be made available in the evenings, on weekends, and during school vacations for those who cannot attend the normal school day. The core-plus school responds to the needs of the whole community, not just a small percentage of it.

Relevance — The third major concern about the school system is in the area of relevance. The issue of relevance is very closely tied to the notion of accountability, and schools have seldom been accountable to anyone outside of the school system. At a time when accountability has become a major issue for governments and agencies at all levels, it is both responsive and realistic that the core-plus school be accountable, first to its local community and then to society as a whole. At a time when the trend is towards participatory democracy, it is both realistic and responsive for the core-plus school to enlarge its decision-making base and to train people in the skills needed in order to effectively participate. A number of studies have shown that people who are involved in the decision-making process are more accepting of the decisions than those who are not. If this is the case, it is appropriate for the core-plus school to include the community in the decision-making process.

Other studies have shown that those who are concerned about the relevance of schools have had very little to do with schools, whereas those who are involved in the school are more accepting of school programs. The importance of involving the local community in the decision-making processes cannot be taken too lightly, since it is more likely that expertise in the areas of industry, technology, alternative funding sources, environmental issues and new forms of communication will be in the community than in the schools. Tapping this expertise will be vital to the core-plus school's existence.

To properly serve the society and the individual, the core-plus school needs to concentrate on providing the skills through both programs and process. Since many who have already passed through schools have not been trained in the process aspects of living, then the staff of schools need to initiate activities that will assist in this. The programs made available will cater to the children, youth, young adults and senior citizens of the community, as well as special groups such as those who need retraining, assistance in literacy, language skills or personal development programs. However the process components involve helping the community decide for itself what sorts of activities that it needs. By empowering the community, the feelings of alienation can be lessened if not resolved. By empowering the community, the individuals within it get experience at decision-making, at participating, at justifying and all of the other activities that assist the individual to become a participative person. Empowering the community provides experiences that assist the development of the "core", providing the programs gives the individual the skills to choose the direction that he or she wants to go, professionally or personally.

The acceptance of the core-plus model is really based on the acceptance of principles of community education. This concept, community education, implies that the current and future society will require that we educate the entire community. However, in this context, education is not synonomous with schooling. Education really connotes all of the activities related to helping individuals cope in their own circumstances. Anyone who contributes to this education is thus a teacher, and at any given time we are all teachers while at other times we are learners. Community education is, then, a term which recognizes the need to educate all members of the community. When defined in this fashion, the concept is closely related to the futuristic "age of knowledge" idea and may well describe the basis on which the future society will function. The basic beliefs of community education are:

1. Education is not synonymous with schooling and deals with an area much broader than technical training or vocational preparation.
2. Education is a lifetime process and is an integral part of the environment in which we live.
3. There are many groups and individuals involved in the education process, and every community has an abundance of untapped educational resources.
4. Education is our most valuable resource.
5. We should seek to maximize facilities and resources since collectively such resources can accomplish much more than they can individually.
6. Involvement of the community is a community right which results in better decisions and better community support.

7. Improvement of the small community is the best approach to improving the larger community.
8. Services should be delivered as close as possible to where people live.
9. Educational activities should be based on the needs and problems of people for whom they are planned.
10. The educative process (problem solving) is the most important means of meeting individual and community needs.

The purpose of community education is to instill these principles into the lives of our citizens by changing the roles of existing institutions so that they are in harmony with the community education concept. Community educators are those who can subscribe to the principles of community education and are willing to try to change their institutions and lives accordingly. "Core-plus" schools would be those public schools which attempt to make their role compatible to the beliefs of community education.

Chapter VI - Conclusion

While some critics may assume that core-plus education will have a negative impact on the K-12 educational program, this is not the intent. In fact, children would be served better than they have in the past. The fact that they would become a part of the educational system rather than the focal point of our present-educational endeavors need not diminish our efforts to provide them with a good foundation for learning or for the achievement of goals established for them by the community. Core-plus education should enhance the current K-12 program because it emphasizes lifetime education, the use of the community as a resource for supplementing the classrooms, the recognition of the community as a place where learning takes place, and the awareness that learning how to learn, learning for personal growth, and learning to actively participate in one's community are as important as learning the basics and learning a vocation.

In addition, there are other benefits to the K-12 programs as a result of core-plus education. Since the entire population of the community is a part of the educational system, there is now a chance for greater support of the traditional program, since community members now feel that they are a part of the "school system" and receive services which they did not receive before. A second bonus is that schools will be dealing with students of all ages, and K-12 students will receive an inter-generational experience not available to such students here-to-fore. They will also grow up in an atmosphere which implies that education is lifetime in nature and will thus feel less pressure to achieve everything in a given and limited period of time. The third benefit will be an increased time to learn related to the current school year. Core-plus education would not be bound by the typical school year, days or hours. Educational experiences would take place before and after the traditional school day, on weekends and during the summer. Students would have learning experiences with qualified people in the community as well as with professional teachers. This expanded time would have a great impact on learning, particularly as it could address the current concerns about learning related to time on task.

It is important to recognize that it was never the purpose of this document to deal totally with the improvement of instructors and learning for the traditional school age child. Instead, it was the intent to describe a new role for public schools. However, this new role will accomplish some very positive things for K-12 programs as well as other community members, and persons investigating this concept should be aware of these positive benefits which have been cited.

But while the K-12 program would receive some benefits as a result of core-plus education, there would certainly be observable benefits to the rest of the community as well. For example, there would be course offerings for adults similar to those offered in the regular school programs. Whether for the purpose of "basics" or high school graduation or whether for more specific and unique needs, adults would become a part of the teacher/learner community and would be served or utilized as resources for others to learn. Artificial age limits would be erased, and learning would truly become "life-time" in nature.

There could also be a reconceptualization of facility usage. The school building would now be perceived as a community center. Not only would there be increased use by the traditional school age child, but community members would be encouraged to hold their activities there whenever possible. Buildings would be designed around the idea that the "core" of the building would be permanent and would house such community areas as the gymnasium, pools, libraries, meeting rooms, cafeteria, the auditorium, and community office space. The "plus" facilities would be those areas such as classrooms which are temporary in nature and can be increased or eliminated as needs in that community change.

Another function of the "core-plus" school would be to assist in the process aspects of delivery of services and community involvement. The school would provide physical space for the housing of services and would serve as facilitators or brokers in the bringing together of clients with resources. They would also assist and encourage the development of community councils and community involvement. The functions would not only include the mechanical aspects of organizing the community, but the providing of skills necessary for the functioning of such a structure.

The most important aspect of core-plus education, however, is its change in the perception of what public schooling should be. It starts with the premise that schools must change because society has changed, and it suggests the development of an educational system to replace the school system. Paramount to this thought is the idea that schooling is but a part of education and that only an educational system which deals with life education for all members of its society can provide for the educational needs of its people and its community in the years ahead. It accepts the fact that there is no terminal date or final degree for an educated person.

It is our contention that current education focuses on a limited responsibility - preparation of the individual for a skill which will allow him to earn a living. This training has dominated our educational programs and precluded other valuable learning so that the individual has not realized his potential, either personally or as a participant in his community, and as a result, has developed a sense of alienation.

Core-plus education recognizes the need for vocational education. However, this is seen as only one of the goals of education. The core of education is regarded as that related to participation and service. These seem to be absolute in a participatory democracy. John Dewey joined the terms democracy and education many years ago, but nothing has been done during the interim years to accommodate such a thought. The teaching and implementation of the democratic function should be the primary consideration of the educational system in each community.

The "plus" side of education deals with two specific areas - learning a skill for earning a living and learning for the purpose of personal growth. Both areas would require training in basic skills since such skills are fundamental to both a job and self development. Obviously, both are also tied up with lifetime education. The changing society currently requires vocational retraining for each individual of about five times in their lifetime. It is likely that this phenomenon will continue. The personal growth aspect relates to leisure time, both in one's working years and also during retirement.

Thus core-plus education might be described in the following way. School would be for everyone in the community on an equal basis. The program and the facilities would be organized to provide a "core" for everyone which would consist of training in the skills and attitudes needed by the citizens in a democracy and the operation of councils and committees which assure the process of participatory democracy in each community. In addition, the educational system would have a "plus" aspect which would deal with programs for job training and for personal development. These programs would be identified on the basis of community need, and the programs would vary depending on the demographics of the community.

If school is to survive, it needs to dramatically change its perception of its role in society. If the scenario painted has any basis, then it would seem to indicate a time for a re-evaluation of the significance of education. It has been suggested that the future of the school depends on the community's perception of its importance. Should the community continue to have a poor view of education, it may well disappear altogether. There are many who are already saying that the school is incapable of change; that institutions are great at perpetuating themselves and that the school is a perfect example of this. The futurists, however, have painted a brave new challenge for the schools in their description of the post industrial society. They give great credibility to the importance of knowledge and have used terms which would predict that we are coming into an "age of education".

Those of us who view ourselves as professional educators are excited about the potential of these predictions. Outsiders are suggesting that our discipline has an opportunity to have a greater impact on our society than does any other profession. These opportunities happen only rarely in history. Whether education as a profession is perceptive enough to react accordingly will determine whether professional educators will become architects or laborers in this momentous educational change.